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AUTHOR	Conti, Scott D.; Ellsasser, Christopher W.; Griffin, Gary A.
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ABSTRACT

The first wave of school improvement, largely perceived later as a failure, responded to Sputnik-era fears the United States was falling behind other nations, and focused on minor reforms of the educational system. Larry Cuban distinguishes the first-order changes of the first wave from the more fundamental changes implied in second wave efforts. The current third wave of school restructuring focuses on choice, implementing more challenging standards, and achieving better schcol outcomes. A series of reports in 1983-84 crystallized a national consensus for change in educational practice, best exemplified by the "A Nation at Risk" report in 1983. The literature indicates educational problems are systemic, schools are not fundamentally sound, and schools will not undertake reforms without internal and external changes. Common assumptions in restructuring literature include the need to promote teacher participation, professional development, learning about the change process, and changes in school culture. A trend in restructuring literature is the perceived importance of teacher empowerment in focusing restructuring work directly on effective teaching and learning. Restructuring requires new types of leadership from both principals and teachers, a slow, complex, and chaotic process. Major school restructuring studies from 1991-98 are described with brief summaries of major conclusions. Taken together, these studies indicate restructuring can effectively improve school conditions, capacities, cultures, and student learning, and they highlight the need for a constructivist approach tailored to particular circumstances. Studies demonstrate that when conditions, structures, and cultures promote their influence, teachers respond by focusing on the teaching and learning process, particularly where supportive leaders exist to facilitate the reform process. (Contains 86 references.) (TEJ)

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School Restructuring

A Literature Review

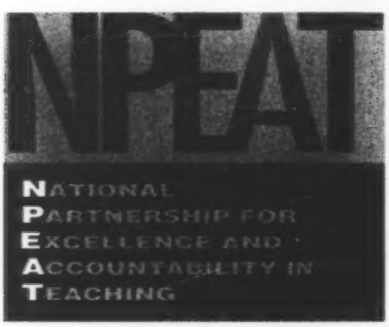
Scott D. Conti, Christopher W. Ellsasser, and Gary A. Griffin

Scott D. Conti

Christopher W. Ellsasser

Gary A. Griffin

National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching
Teachers College, Columbia University



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SCHOOL RESTRUCTURING

In the early 70s Paul Cusick (1973) returned more than twelve years after he graduated, to high school to carry out a participant observation study of students. Cusick was concerned with the school experience for high school adolescents. Cusick, in his thirties with experience as a high school teacher and an administrator, attended classes with students, ate lunch with students, and spent time with students outside of school. Cusick observed students experiencing little interaction with teachers; learned students are more concerned with compliance to rules, regulations and the routine than the construction of knowledge; and found that students spend most of their time hanging around together in small groups, having little or nothing to do with school. He concluded that schools are set up so that teachers pass on knowledge and students receive it, creating a doctrine of adolescent inferiority and downward communication which denies students freedom of activity by only requiring minimal competence to do well in classes. Cusick recommended a change in basic structures of schools so that the role of teachers might change. In the twenty-plus years since Cusick's study the question needs to be asked, "Have things changed?"

Cusick's call for the restructuring of schools has been publicly echoed by educators and non educators since the launching of Sputnik in 1957, which prompted Americans to believe that schools must change. This public concern that poor education might cause the United states to lose its place in the world as an economic and military leader led politicians to formulate the National Defense Education Act in 1958, which called for increased federal aid to education and an all out assault on the then current conditions of schooling.

The 1960's followed Sputnik as an era of failed innovation in which outsiders from the federal government and universities attempted to "fix" what was wrong inside of schools with little or no attention given to the beliefs and assumptions held by school insiders. In the 1970's efforts moved away from the innovation attempts and equity concerns of the 60's to concerns over accountability and implementation (Dufour & Eaker, 1992). In 1970, scholars like John Goodlad and Seymour Sarason asked why certain innovations were being adopted and they challenged the lack of forethought given to follow-through (Fullan, 1991). Although efforts in the 1970's seemed to be concerned less with what was being taught and more with how students were being taught and how students and schools could be assessed (Jurich, 1996), top-down improvement efforts in the form of legislative action like the 1975 Public Law 94-142, which called for the inclusion of handicapped children, and policy making designed to make schools teacher proof through carefully designed curriculum both failed to improve schools because they had little effect on the actual day-to-day teaching and learning taking place in classrooms.

Ultimately, all of this concern over education, the election of Ronald Reagan to replace Jimmy Carter, and the nation's concern for its weakening economy led to a 1983 series of evaluation reports which crystallized the national consensus for school change. These reports included the following: *High School* (Boyer, 1983); *America's competitive challenge: The need for a national response* (Business-Higher Education Reform, 1983); *Academic Preparation for college: What students need to know and be able to do* (College Board Educational Equity Project, 1983); *Action for Excellence* (Education Commission for the States Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983), *A place called school: Prospects for the future* (Goodlad, 1983); and *A Nation At Risk*

(National Commission on Excellence and Education, 1983). Complaints raised in these reports included the following: concerns over the nation's economic and strategic competitiveness in the global market place, failing test scores, decreasing international competitiveness of students, the increasing inequalities between rich and poor, the desire to professionalize the practice of teaching, and an overall perception that the educational system was failing. Kirst (1990) noted the public demanded change because of the presumed linkage between international and interstate economic competition and the importance of an educated work force, which was considered crucial to higher productivity.

The first wave of school improvement was a direct response to fears that our nation was falling behind and the belief that intensifying current educational practices would improve the educational system and subsequently keep the United States competitive in the world economy. Bachrach (1990) identified the first wave as an intensification of the current system which, rather than changing the fundamental nature of the educational system, aimed to make students work harder. The first wave of educational reform was more concerned with repairing the current system based on the assumption that schools were fundamentally sound, and sought to raise achievement through rigorous academic standards for students and more recognition and higher standards for teachers. However, the first wave of school reform efforts were viewed as a failure (Cuban, 1990; Fullan, 1991; Hess, 1991; Sarason, 1991; Sizer, 1985).

Consequently, the second wave of school change efforts attacked the problem from a different perspective by attempting to rethink, reinvent, or "restructure" schools. The second wave was an attempt to intensify the existing delivery system, promote

professionalism among teachers, allocate funding to schools based on merit, create an employer-driven strategy which would encourage educators to work as partners in the business of schooling, and create a consumer oriented strategy which would place the burden on schools to treat students and parents as customers by introducing choice in the form of vouchers. A blueprint for the second wave came from the Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy in 1986, which concluded that teachers were frustrated to the point of cynicism (an attitude partially established in the post-Sputnik days when outsiders came into schools to fix what was broken with little or no regard for insiders) and that there was a danger of political gridlock between teachers and policy makers, who saw themselves as adversaries in the restructuring process. The report acknowledged a need for, "a professional environment for teachers, freeing teachers to decide how best to meet state and local goals for children but holding them accountable for student progress" (p. 26). The forum suggested that the keys for restructuring were (1) restructure schools to provide a professional environment; (2) restructure the nature of the teaching force; (3) revise the recruitment, education, and induction of teachers; (4) make salaries and career opportunities market competitive; (5) relate incentives to school-wide performance; and (6) provide technology, services, and staff needed for teacher productivity. The report was followed by the Results in Education (1987) report by the National Governors' Association, which demanded that states "assume larger responsibilities for setting educational goals and defining outcomes standards" (p. 3). The report also acknowledged the need to stimulate local inventiveness, increase educational productivity and professionalize teaching by requiring new school structures

that allowed "more varied instructional arrangements, greater collegian interaction among teachers, and greater teacher involvement in decision making" (p. 3).

Cuban (1988) outlined the difference between the two waves by saying first wave was comprised of first-order changes that only improved the efficiency and effectiveness of what was currently being done. According to Cuban (1988) second-order changes were those which looked beyond current practices and beliefs by seeking to alter the fundamental ways in which organizations were put together, including goals, structures, and roles such as collaborative relationships between teachers and administrators. Fullan (1991) noted that most reform efforts during the century had been first-order changes, with second-order reform attempts largely failing. He wrote, "The challenge of the 1990's will be to deal with more second-order changes that affect the culture and structure of schools, restructuring roles and reorganizing responsibilities, including those of students and parents" (p. 29).

While the first wave of restructuring proposals emphasized broad philosophical questions about schools' structures, missions and methods; and the second wave focused more heavily on teachers themselves and stressed the need for increased participation, improved working conditions for staff, teacher empowerment, and site-based management (Evans, 1996). The current third wave focuses on choice and calls for changes which define more challenging standards for learning while restructuring schools to produce better outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 1996). Unlike the earlier two waves, which tinkered with the system, this third wave, the wave of choice, challenges the fundamental organization and management of schools. Current proponents of choice argue that,

> Although our public schools honor diversity and pluralism by bringing together students from many different backgrounds, they simultaneously dishonor those values by requiring conformity to state-imposed policies on controversial issues about which reasonable people differ and by prohibiting the use of public funds in schools that differ from the majoritarian consensus. (Ravitch, 1998, p. 252)

The third wave presents options like vouchers and charter schools which are said to place schools back in the hands of the community while requiring that each school meet certain national standards as a means of maintaining quality. Current research suggests that the most successful schools are those that have a sense of purpose, a mission, and an identity of their own which grows out of a capacity to honor the values and beliefs of the smaller community while simultaneously adhering to the standards of education set by the larger society.

Twenty-five years have passed since Cusick's research, but there is a feeling that one could step into a high school today and observe the same behaviors and come to the same conclusions as he did. Seymour Sarason (1996) reflected on this lack of change in the revisiting of his 1971 book on school cultures, in which he explained,

> What I attempted to do when I wrote the book 25 years ago was to indicate how that sense of powerlessness had self-defeating consequences for everyone in the school culture, i.e., students, teachers, principals, parents. And I emphasized reform efforts that did not change the sense of pervasive powerlessness wouldn't achieve their goal of improving the quality and outcomes of schooling. Nothing I observed and read since I wrote the book has caused me to change my views. I have known a classroom here and a classroom there, a school here and a school there, where power relationships have been appropriately changed with encouraging results. That cannot be said for any school system I know or about which I have read. (p. 344)

The purpose of this paper is to get at some understanding of why so little has changed in schools and what could be done to promote change in schools. We focus

specifically on the restructuring efforts that have taken place since the 1983 publication of *A Nation at Risk*. The first section of the paper establishes the political context for the restructuring movement by reviewing the seminal studies on school restructuring from 1983-84. By focusing on the rationale behind the nation's call for school change, the second section explores the question of why restructuring is needed. The third section focuses on the varied definitions of restructuring and the various concepts and themes which have come out of the movement. The fourth section attempts to provide a synthesis of the studies that have been conducted on restructuring in the recent decade. The postscript comments on the observation that each wave, although different in method, has shared a common belief, in agreement with John Dewey, what the best and wisest parent wants for his or her child, must be what the community wants for all of its children. Dewey believed any other ideal for our schools is narrow and unlovely and it destroys our democracy.

Given the increasing diversity and complexity of American society, which has produced multiple and often competing definitions of what Dewey called "best and wisest," the degree to which the current restructuring wave improves our schools depends on the movement's ability to synthesize and blend the lessons learned from the successes and failures of the previous waves, and the movement's ability to develop each school's capacity to accommodate its communities' particular view of "the good life" while simultaneously honoring some national set of education standards.

The Research Context Created by the 1983-84 Reports

In 1983 and 1984 a series of evaluation reports crystallized the national consensus for change: *High School* (Boyer, 1983), *America's competitive challenge: The need for a*

national response (Business-Higher Education Reform, 1983); *Academic Preparation for college: What students need to know and be able to do* (College Board Educational Equity Project, 1983); *Action for Excellence* (Education Commission for the States Task Force on Education for Economic Growth, 1983); *A place called school: Prospects for the future* (Goodlad, 1984); and *A Nation At Risk* (National Commission on Excellence and Education, 1983). These reports can be seen as the Sputnik of the 80s in that they set off a flurry of reform efforts designed to get schools back in shape.

Ernest Boyer's *High School* responded to a call for the "nation's high schools to serve their students more effectively and regain public confidence and support" (p. XI). Boyer hoped to push for both quality and equity. The study lasted for two years, and used a panel of teachers, principals, superintendents, university administrators, parents, school board members, and citizen representatives who looked at public schools as educational institutions where people come to study and learn. This panel's findings were then used to define the issues for the foundation's twenty-five member group investigation of fifteen public high schools with the purpose of examining a cross-section of American public secondary education. Each school visit lasted for twenty days, during which time the investigators went to classes, attended pep rallies and sports events, sat in on faculty and PTA meetings, observed counselors and principals at work, and conducted extensive interviews.

The report concludes with these twelve priorities:

- high schools must have clear and vital missions
- high schools must help all students become skilled in written and oral English

- high schools' basic curriculums should be a study of the consequential ideas, experiences, and traditions common to all
- high schools should help all students move confidently from school to work and further education
- high schools should help all students meet their social and civic obligations
- high school teachers' working conditions must improve
- improving high school instruction requires a variety of changes in pedagogy
- technology enriches instruction and should be linked to school objectives
- greater flexibility in school size and time usage will help schools achieve their educational objectives
- rebuilding excellence in education means reaffirming the importance of the local school and freeing leadership to lead
- the quality of high schools is shaped by the quality of their connections to junior high schools and elementary schools
- school improvement depends on public commitment.

In 1983 the Business-Higher Education Forum- presented the President of the United States with *America's Competitive Challenge: The need for a national response*, which was to provide a set of recommendations designed to strengthen the nation's ability to compete more effectively in the world marketplace. The Forum had three major goals: "to identify, review and act on selected issues and topics that relate to the current and future requirements of business and higher education; to enhance public awareness of the concerns shared by business and academic leaders and to serve as a positive contributor in helping shape policy thinking as it affects those concerns; and to

help guide the evolution of future relationships between corporate America and institutions of higher learning, while preserving their separate historical and traditional functions."

The report makes one central recommendation that society must agree that industrial competitiveness on a global scale is crucial to the nation's social and economic well-being. The authors of the report made this recommendation based on their belief that without a rebuilding of the economy and a strengthening the educational system, the nation be unable to maintain a just society with a high standard of living and a strong national defense. The report concluded that the nation's ability to compete depended on three related elements: fruitful capital investment, technological innovation, and the development of human resources. The report then urged the president to take three actions: appoint an Adviser on Economic Competitiveness, who will help the president and policy-makers focus on the diverse concerns that are basic to an effective competitive effort; create a private sector commission charged with developing consensus on issues of competitiveness and conveying those views to government; and establish a bureau in the U.S. Department of Commerce to operate an information center on international competitiveness.

In 1983 The College Board published the report *Academic Preparation for College: What Students Need to Know and Be Able to Do*, which sought to bring schools and colleges together for the solution of their common problems. The report is organized into five areas: identifying the outcomes, the basic academic competencies, computer competency, the basic academic subjects, and achieving outcomes.

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In "Identifying Outcomes" the authors argue that each student "deserves a fair chance to succeed in higher education" (p. 1). To help in this effort the report highlights what college students need to know and be able to do to be successful. It explains that preparation should be improved so that we might deliver on our national promise for equal access to higher education. Academic preparation is defined as providing students with the knowledge and skills they need in the six basic academic subjects: reading, writing, speaking and listening, mathematics, reasoning, and studying. In the section on "The Basic Academic Competencies," the report goes on to list in specific detail the abilities that students should have in each of these areas. In the "Computer Competency" section the report recognizes that the revolution in communications and information technology has made the computer a basic tool for "acquiring knowledge, organizing systems, and solving problems" (p. 11). The section calls for students to have the following preparation: "a basic knowledge of how computers work and of common computer terminology; some ability to use the computer and appropriate software; an awareness of when and how computers may be used in the academic disciplines and various fields of work, as well as in daily life; and some understanding of the problems and issues confronting individuals - and society generally - in the use of computers, including the social and economic effects of computers and the ethics involved in their use."

In 1983 the Education Commission for the States Task Force on Education for Economic Growth came out with their *Action for Excellence* report, which was then followed by their *Action in the States* . The reports reviewed initiatives in education reform affecting elementary and secondary education in 50 states, 3 territories, and the

District of Columbia. The initiatives were broken down into eight recommendations, each of which was followed by descriptions of exemplary state activities and a profile of activity in one particular state.

The 1984 report contained the following eight recommendations: develop, and put into effect as promptly as possible, state plans for improving education in the public schools from kindergarten through grade twelve; create broader and more effective partnerships for improving education in the states and communities of the nation; marshal the resources that are essential for improving the public schools; express a new and higher regard for teachers; make the academic experience more intensive and more productive; provide quality assurance in education; improve leadership and management in the schools; and serve better those students who are now unserved or underserved. The report concluded with the warning that each state, district, and school must place reform recommendations in the context of its own particular situation, thus acknowledging the importance of schools coming to understand themselves and their particular needs, so that policy could call for self-examination, a consideration for diverse needs, and a variety of approaches to change. The report also called for reform, which directly impacted curricular practices.

In 1984 John I. Goodlad wrote *A Place Called School*, which sought to assist in the effort to increase readers' understanding of schools and schooling so that schools might be improved on an individual and contextualized basis rather than with some all-purpose solution; to present some recommendations for both the substance and the process of school improvement; and to stress the point that no single set of recommendations applies to all schools, which means that in order for successful

improvement of a particular school depends on data related to a specific school. Goodlad remains true to his belief in the danger of those school reformers who are in search of the education panacea, and he is careful to avoid presenting any type of laundry list of recommendations, which might be adopted by readers.

Goodlad provided a comprehensive agenda for improving schools, which was based on an extensive on-the-scene investigation called, A Study of Schooling. The premise of this investigation was that schools must be redesigned piece by piece. The aspects of schooling that are discussed include: curriculum, school/community relations, the quality of teaching, time spent by students on a task, and the methods of instruction. The investigation was carried on over several years. Goodlad recommends that (1) the state should hold the district accountable for communicating the state's goals of education, developing balanced curricula in each school, employing qualified teachers, providing time and resources for local school improvement; (2) districts should decentralize authority and responsibility so that each school is held responsible for providing a balanced program of studies; and (3) schools must become largely self-directing. Goodlad's picture of decentralization was schools linked to a hub (central district). Schools need to encourage the development of self-renewing capability to stimulate creative ways to achieve desired ends. Teachers, especially secondary, need more time to plan, reflect, and design curriculum. Two discussions need to be underway: one school-wide by the whole school community and the other by faculty in developing understanding and appreciation of the kinds of learning to be sought in their students. Curriculum at the site level needs to be compared with an ideal prototype. Curriculum specifics designed to teach concepts, skills, and values become ends rather than means.

Goodlad believed that we need centers to combine and alter curricular balance for schools around the nation and a common core of studies from which students cannot escape through electives. He also wanted tracking and ability grouping to be ended. The study found a narrow range of teaching practices and many classes rooms without stimulating teaching because (1) there was no pressure to change practices, (2) most teachers taught the way they were taught, (3) teacher-education programs were not of sufficient to transcend conventional wisdom, and (4) too much teacher autonomy in the classroom. Goodlad recommended employing instructional leaders as heads for units of schools. All heads would be part-time teachers in order to increase the level of cooperation between teachers and principals. He also called for a need to connect elementary, middle schools and high schools, and the desirability of small schools made more feasible by the schools within a school concept.

In April of 1983 The National Commission on Excellence in Education presented "an open letter to the American People" titled *A Nation at Risk*, which was a specific response to Secretary of Education T.H. Bell's 1981 request for a report on the quality of education in America, and a more general response to the public perception that the educational system was failing. The commission was given instructions to pursue five specific charges:

- assess the quality of teaching and learning in our nation
- compare American schools and colleges with those of advanced nations
- study the relationship between college admissions requirements and student achievement in high schools
- identify educational programs which lead to student success in college

- assess the affect of major social changes on student achievement and define problems which must be overcome to pursue excellence in education

Information for the report was drawn from the following: papers by experts on educational issues; administrators, teachers, students, professional and public groups, parents, business leaders, public officials, and scholars; existing analyses of problems in education; letters from concerned citizens, teachers, and administrators; and descriptions of notable programs and approaches.

The report begins "Our Nation is at risk. . . If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war. As it stands, we have allowed this to happen to ourselves. We have even squandered the gains in student achievement made in the wake of the Sputnik challenge. Moreover, we have dismantled essential support systems that helped make those gains possible. We have, in effect, been committing an act of unthinking, unilateral educational disarmament" (p. 1). Having pointed the weaknesses in the current system, the report presents recommendations for five areas: content, standards and expectations, time, teaching, and leadership and fiscal support.

In regard to content, the report recommended that State and local high school graduation requirements be strengthened and that all students seeking a diploma be required to lay foundations in the Five New Basics: 4 years of English, 3 years of mathematics, 3 years of science, 3 years of social studies, one-half year of computer science, and two years of foreign language in high school for college-bounds students." In regard to standards and expectations, the recommendation was that schools, colleges, and universities use more rigorous and measurable standards, demand higher

expectations for academic performance and student conduct, and that 4-year colleges and universities raise their admission's requirements. In regard to time, the recommendation was that significantly more time be devoted to learning the New Basics. In regard to teaching, the recommendation was that teacher preparation be improved and that teaching be a more rewarding and respected profession. Efforts to improve the condition of teaching and teachers included higher educational standards for teachers; increased salaries which were, market-sensitive, and performance-based; an 11-month contract; career ladders that distinguish between the beginner, the experienced and the master teacher; the provision of substantial non school personnel resources; incentives such as grants and loans to attract outstanding students to the teaching profession, and master teachers who design teacher preparation and supervise teachers during their probationary years. In regard to leadership and fiscal support, the recommendation was for all citizens to hold educators and elected officials responsible for providing the leadership to achieve these reforms, and for those same citizens provide the fiscal support and stability required to bring about the reforms. The report concluded with a challenge to use education as a means to secure America's place in the world.

Rationale for Restructuring

The call for school change has remained consistent since the public first reacted to the launching of Sputnik in 1957, which created a sense of national crisis and solidified the widely held belief that schools are doing a poor job of educating our nation's children; however, the rationale given for education's condition varies, depending on the perspective taken. Goodlad (1984) found a narrow range of teaching practices and concluded that few classrooms are stimulating places. Ten years later, Goodlad (1994)

saw inequalities in curriculum access among the rich and the poor, supporting his belief that we still needed to speak of equity and excellence, which he supported with the premise that a lack of academic achievement is not the fault of the student. He sees curricular and instructional sterility in the system as the major problems in the system. Barnett and Whitaker (1996) looked outside the schools and believed the rationale for reforming American public schools was based on the public's disenchantment with schools arising from low test scores, market forces, need for accountability and the need to professionalize teaching. In respect to the entire system of education, Jurich (1996) found that one of the assumptions that undergirds the notion of restructuring is that schools are not fundamentally sound, and that schools need more than first order changes in curriculum and the implementation of innovative teaching strategies. Reilly (1995, 1996), echoing the others who see problems with the current system but also look to the external forces acting on the educational system, believed education was in a state of crises and would continue to fail under current conditions of educational governance, control, organization, and teaching priorities. He believed the cause of educator's failures was their close association and near dependency on the whims of political, economic and special interest groups. Consequently, he argued that educational reform flaws grow out of the fact that those who are in charge of determining educational policy and practice are non educators, which contributes to the fact that American education is rooted in a hodgepodge of assumptions, causing Americans to avoid establishing a professional agenda and mistaking symptoms rather than deeply seated conditions as the cause of educational difficulties.

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Keedy & Achilles (1996) found that structural changes cannot change how people think about their work because schools and staffs need to first establish consensual, normative frameworks beginning with their own practices. They also called for the asking of questions about why change is wanted, what is to be achieved, and how to go about the change process as new organizational structures are implemented. The authors believed that if conditions didn't change, then students would continue to see little connection between curriculum and their daily lives.

There has been a growing concern that the problem in schools is systemic. Darling-Hammond (1996) believed that the survival of the nation depended heavily on our ability to educate students. She believed we needed to reinvent the system of U.S. public education so that it ensured a "right to learn" for all students. According to Darling-Hammond, we needed to build a system of schools so that we could educate people for contemporary society, help students understand ideas deeply and perform proficiently, and so all learners could find productive paths to knowledge. Cohn & Kottamp (1993) also believed the problem was systemic and that the system needed to change to empower teachers and stakeholders. They saw an ever increasing tension between what contemporary teachers wanted to accomplish and what teachers were expected to accomplish. They saw major conflicts and shocks that arise for teachers caught between the strong and pressing demands of accountability from outside the classroom and the equally strong sense of responsibility they personally feel to devote time to purposes beyond the prescribed curriculum and to the development of interpersonal and pedagogical desires.

Herbst (1996) called for the restructuring of the entire system, including the dismantling of the costly school bureaucracy. McDonald (1996) believed we must reorient our common sense about how to re-create schools to provide intellectually powerful education for all children. As an explanation for why systemic restructuring must take place, Sarason (1996) found that educational institutions were amazingly resourceful in avoiding and resisting change. Consequently, ignorance of how change occurs has left educators with the sense that "the more things change, the more they stay the same." Sarason believed that educational change had been a failure and we were still trying to figure out how to support the learning of adults so that they in turn could facilitate active learning for their students. Foremost, Sarason believed school culture and power relationships remained at the heart of the problem, and presented the greatest challenge to improving schooling.

Definition, Concept and Themes in Restructuring Literature

Restructuring is based on the perception that schools are not fundamentally sound, and that more than first order changes are needed to improve them (Fullan, 1991; Schlechty, 1990). Cuban (1990) believed that school restructuring, in contrast to other reforms focused second order changes - changes that alter the basic goals, structures and roles within schools. The perception was that existing schools structures and school cultures needed to change before school improvement could exist.(Blase & Blase, 1997; Reilly, 1995; Coleman, 1997; McDonald, 1996).

Restructuring is viewed as a systemic change or transformation with the intent of improving educational effectiveness in ways that meet the changing needs of our society. It is believed that new and alternative structural conditions can support the creation of

growth, innovation, and change in schools (Milestein, 1993; Louis, Marks and Kruse, 1996). In a study of restructuring schools, Griffin (1996) found that restructuring focused on the basic elements, assumptions and institutional regularities.

> In restructuring schools, it is claimed that the basic deeply-seated assumptions about teaching and schooling are being challenged, seriously examined for current soundness of educational practice, in some cases altered dramatically, and in other cases eliminating conditions of schooling as most of us have come to know them (Griffin, 1996, p. 1).

Others such as Reilly (1995), who complained that education would continue to fail under current conditions of educational governance, control, organization and teaching priorities supported Griffin (1996). Lambert (1996) believed that only when schools develop alternative structures that invite and facilitative development opportunities for professional growth would schools change. In support of this call for collaboration, Bondy, Kilgore, Ross and Webb(1994) found site based management works when schools have shared democratic governance structures put in place to promote professional development.

While restructuring literature promotes the changing of the basic elements, assumptions, structures, and school site cultures, there is the belief that schools cannot restructure themselves without the proper external conditions. Darling-Hammond (1997) promoted system wide changes in policy and practice to make schools more learner centered. She pointed to the failure of effective schools movement as an example of the negative effects of a policymaking environment that does little to nourish schools. The 1996 report *What Matters Most: Teaching for Americas Future,* a report by the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, called for the recruitment, preparation and support of excellent teachers as the single most important strategy for achieving

America's educational goals. Based on a two year study, the Commission found low expectations for students, unenforced standards for teachers, major flaws in teacher preparation and painfully slipshod teacher recruitment as barriers to the goals of educational reform. The Commission made recommendations in five areas: standards for teachers and students, the reinvention of teacher preparation and professional development, improved teacher recruitment while placing qualified teachers in every classroom, encouragement and rewards for knowledge and skill in teachers, and the creation of schools that are organized for students' and teachers' success. The report supported the belief that while proper conditions are needed internally in school sites, appropriate external conditions must exist to support good schooling.

A growing trend in the restructuring literature, as noted above, is an acknowledgment of the importance of uniting the external and internal support needed for good schooling. The call for a proper balance between internal and external conditions is based on the belief that restructuring is a complex, multidimensional, and on-going process because schools are complex, diverse and multidimensional (Jurich 1996). Lambert (1996) used the term "ecological web" which weaves together students, communities, and teachers as players in the problem solving process. The concept of an ecological web can be easily enlarged to include district, state, and national policy-makers as well as universities, teacher unions, and textbook companies as variables impacting the quality of individual school sites. Lane (1990), who viewed restructuring as building a new sense of community at school sites, was careful to point out that many agree that a sense of community develops by school sites and staffs working on goals, means, and outcomes aimed at high student achievement. Lane also found that external

forces such as educational policy affected this type of networking or collaboration. Thus, Lane believed school restructuring should promote the concept of a school community comprised of community members who represented the external forces that served that school community. Goodlad (1994) believed education needed to allow all students to have access to knowledge, which meant, in part, restructuring an end to tracking. For tracking to end, the financing systems for schools need to be changed as well as the creation of a national moral agenda for schools. Darling-Hammond (1996) believed a new paradigm for educational policy was needed to help redesign schools so they focused on learning, fostered strong relationships, and supported in-depth intellectual work. She supported this call for a return to public education driven by Horace Mann's idea of a Common School. Barnett and Whitaker (1996) saw dualistic themes emerging in the restructuring field: the redefinition of roles, including the altering of roles and powers or what Cuban referred to as second wave changes; and third wave changes like the marketization of schools which included such alternatives as vouchers, alternative schools and charter schools. Included in this theme was idea of developing standards for schools.

The process of restructuring is also viewed as a process that should not standardized be for all schools. Again, due to the large number of external and internal variables the process of restructuring is complex and multidimensional. Therefore, restructuring must be different at each school site and within each district (Barth, 1990; Cohen, 1990, Elmore, 1990; Olsen et. al, 1994). How schools restructure should be based on internal factors which include needs, make up of students, level of faculty empowerment, school leadership, parent involvement, and external forces such as district

involvement, state policy mandates, community values, and local political forces. This complex mix of variables makes it imperative that schools and their participants have the power to change their schools because they are the ones that best understand their schools, their students, and communities.

However, the importance of the adaptability of the restructuring process for each school site does not mean that there are not common elements in the literature on restructuring schools. Whitaker & Moses (1994) presented a comprehensive view of restructuring by delineating ten components necessary for effective restructuring to occur in K-12 schools. These components included: setting a new mission for the school; reorganizing the school to fit the mission for the school; aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; enhancing the role of teacher, implementing school-centered decision making; expanding the use of technology; providing extended services; and improving school quality and service. This view that restructuring does contain common elements is supported by Milstein's (1993) review of restructuring literature which associated decentralization, professionalism, empowerment, student learning, accountability, and uses of time as important elements of restructuring. Further support for universal "truths" which apply to the restructuring process is found in Blase and Blase's (1997) study of school literature which concluded that school reform requires decisions linked by a common vision, structural change, and cultural change. Further, attention should be paid to the philosophies, values, and beliefs that underlie educational practice. Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995) identified eleven common characteristics connected to effective schools: professional leadership, shared visions and goals, a positive learning environment, concentration on teaching and learning, purposeful teaching, high

expectations, positive reinforcement, monitoring progress, attention to pupil rights and responsibilities, home-school partnership, and an organization committed to learning. Keedy and Achilles (1996), in their review of the literature on restructuring, called for four necessary conditions: practicing site-based management, professionalizing teaching, building the capacity for parent and student choice, and teaching for understanding. We have found a number of common themes in the restructuring literature:

- changing traditional school structures and cultures to promote teacher participation, professionalization, collegiality and a sense of community
- creating a new role for teachers and leaders; focusing on teaching and learning through the professional development of teachers
- giving attention to learning about the change process
- changing the culture and structures of schools

School culture can be defined as the beliefs, values, ideology, regularities, and systems pertinent to a school (Copper, 1990; Sarason 1996; Dufour & Eaker, 1992). The restructuring literature shows a tendency toward the belief that school culture and structures are at the core of the problem of the process of change. Culture and structure, then, are both a major barrier to reform and the major bridge to improvement and change (Lieberman and Rosenholtz, 1987; Sarason, 1996). Evans (1996) went so far as to say that school change was dependent on cultural change, and a systematic change at a deep psychological level involving attitudes, actions, and artifacts. Studies such as that of Cunningham and Gresso (1993) found that researchers, superintendents, and principals desire educational cultures in schools that encourage staffs to continually improve their schools. Fullan and Hargreaves (1994) believed that restructuring was based on the

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belief that individuals and small groups of teachers and principals must create the school and professional cultures they want by beginning with an understanding of their existing school's culture. They also warned that current school cultures often contribute to a lack of bonding and caring in the relationships between teachers and students. Maeher and Medgley (1996) warned that school cultures and structures need to focus students' attention on learning, challenge, and effort if they hope to be effective in educating students.

A key to allowing staffs to change traditional school cultures and structures concerns teacher empowerment, decentralization and staff collegiality. The three encourage and allow teachers and school participants to design their own structures and cultures. The Lieberman, Saxl, and Miles (1990) study of master-teachers found that the building of collegiality is a key in restructuring efforts because collegiality results from building trust and support, engaging in open supportive communication, organizational diagnoses, promoting collaborative relationships, providing materials for others, managing the work, and building the skills and confidence in others. Increased collegiality means that teachers will need to take on new roles and responsibilities in organizations. This call for a new role for teachers is another theme cited in restructuring literature. Fullan and Hargreaves (1994) believed that one of the reasons school failure is so prevalent is the perceived narrow range of roles and responsibilities for teachers. This condition of narrowly perceived roles does not tap teachers' talents and potentials. Cohn and Kottamp (1993) comment that teachers need to be engaged, active, and key players in transforming schools. The restructuring view of teachers emphasizes teacher empowerment, teacher professionalization, and teacher participation, especially in the

area of decision making. Evans (1996) believed that school improvement is embedded in an ethos of empowerment and collegiality. A new role for teachers places a high emphasis on the professional development of teachers. Dufour and Eaker (1992) claimed that the key to school improvement is people improvement. Barth (1990) pointed to the importance of professional development in building school capacity.

A common assumption in restructuring literature is the idea that increased teacher participation and empowerment will increase the capacities of schools and enhance the feelings of community to deal with needs and problems. Associated with a new role for teachers is Barth's (1990) argument that schools have the capacity to improve themselves if the conditions are right. Restructuring literature often view schools as being part of a bureaucratic system that leaves teachers and schools unempowered. Barth called for an increase in the capacities of schools. For Beneveniste (1987), the central question was how to adapt organizations to utilize the talents of professionals who work in them. Beneveniste called for professional organizations to have decentralized decision-making and fewer layered hierarchies. Short, Greer, and Melvin (1994) wrote, "In any attempt to improve schools, attention must be given to roles in decision making and increased opportunities for competence to be developed and displayed" (p. 38). In their study, they found that attempts to create empowered school environments are critical if schools are to restructure to address the critical needs of students.

A trend in the restructuring literature is that empowered teachers can focus restructuring work directly on effective teaching and learning. Goodlad (1994) wanted schooling to be about compelling encounters with first-rate knowledge and lively discussions regarding implications of this knowledge for daily living. He also wanted to

see the cultivation of civility and creative instructional and organizational arrangements to ensure meaningful participation by all students and more. Brooks and Brooks (1993) proposed that educational reform concentrate on student learning and understanding. For learning to take place in schools, they believed, teachers must first become constructivist educators creating a learning environment where students search for meaning, appreciate uncertainty, and inquire responsibly. They saw "teacher-talk," textbooks and worksheets and an overemphasis of curriculum mastery as impediments to constructivist classrooms. James Comer (1993) believed programs need to be structured according to how children grow, function, and develop. Comer wanted schools to become less hierarchical and authoritative. Currently, he believes schools only develop intellectual and cognitive pathways leaving socio-interactive, psycho-emotional, moral, and linguistic capacities underdeveloped. Comer's School Development Program emphasizes the central role of the school in enhancing children's development. Collaboration between teachers, parents and administrators is an essential part of evoking the strengths of children. Comer also believes continuity of school reform is ensured if it is guided by a systematic evaluation process designed to sustain the energy of change in the service of children's progressive learning. Conley (1993) believed the central variables of restructuring are those involved in the teaching-learning process. For Conley, information was seen as a key to change and the transformation of schools. Hopkins, Ainchow, and West (1994) believed that raising student outcomes needs to be developed by focusing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions that support it. These conditions include staff development, collaboration, the use of external developments, fostering of increased clarity, and others. Lambert (1996) called for the structures to be in place for constructivist teacher

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leadership. Lambert explained that, "Constructivist teachers working in schools as active learning communities will confront failing programs"(p. xi).

For restructuring to take place, a new type of leadership is needed. Restructuring demands a more complex and ambiguous role for teachers and leaders. Keedy and Achilles (1996) wrote, "Genuine school restructuring, where students are meaning-makers and problem-solvers, cannot occur without establishing new relationships among students, teachers and principals" (p. 105). Barnett and Whitaker (1996) commented that the restructuring principal leads from the center and is more a facilitator of change than the agent of change. Their idea of a new principal is a developer and promoter of a shared vision, coach of the change process, expert in knowledge to improve student performance, and a cultivator of a sense of community. Principals need to work to empower their staffs and help create the conditions in a school so students and teachers can promote and sustain their own learning.

Bennis and Nanus (1985) commented that effective leaders demonstrate four themes: attention through vision, meaning through communication, trust through positioning, and development of self through positive self-regard. In short, the leader becomes the social architect of the organization. Blase and Blase (1997) found in their study of principals that effective leaders revealed a deep commitment, trusted others, and promoted significant opportunities for collaboration. Evans (1996) believed that school change needs transformational leaders, leaders who focus the organization on purposes and draw respect based on professional and moral authority. Nanus (1992) argued that vision is the key to leadership.

Goodlad (1985) called for employing instructional leaders as heads of schools because an instructional leader is able to promote a strong professional development component in schools. Instructional leaders can better support the growth of teachers, provide staff with continual learning opportunities, and uphold the vision and values of the school better than principals assuming traditional roles. Lieberman, Falk, and Alexander (1994) in a study of teacher-directors find that instructional leaders provide perspective and set priorities in the midst of confusion, and make conflict productive.

The literature points out that a facilitative and supportive principal can encourage restructuring; however, having such a principal does not automatically mean the restructuring process will be effective. Many other variables must be in place in for successful reform to occur, but an authoritative principal who does not promote shared governance will almost certainty ruin all attempts at restructuring. Short, Greer and Melvin (1994) wrote,

> While principals would agree that it is, in many cases, very difficult to bring about change that they wish to see happen within the school environment, it is certain that if the principal does not want change to occur, it will not happen. (p. 49)

The school reform efforts have done much to inform the educational community about the process of school change. It is commonly agreed in the restructuring literature that the school change process is a slow, complex, chaotic, and continuously on-going process. Lieberman, Darling-Hammond and Zuckerman (1991) found in their study that conflict is a necessary part of change. Cooper (1990) in a study of what he calls radical school reform in Chicago and London concluded that things get worse before they get

better. The study by Jervis and McDonald (1996) illustrated the messiness of restructuring for all those involved. Goodlad (1984) believed that schools must be redesigned piece by piece in that total school change is an impossibility unless it happens in small increments. Fullan (1991) reminded us that "change is a process not an event" and change is multidimensional, unique to each individual setting, full of uncertainty and paradoxes, and strikes at personal and professional levels. Fullan believed it is time we change the way we change, so that change can be seen and accepted as necessarily passing through uncertainty. Cohen (1995) sees change, if it happens at all, occurring in slow and incremental steps which follow no process and no plan, but rather emerge as a patchwork of theory, personality, and compromise. Dolan (1994) believed that a single school system is currently in place and that we need to change that system. Evans (1996) focused on the human resources and sees change, especially cultural change, as an extremely difficult process which provokes resistance, but which must be accomplished by people.

Studies of Restructuring

As They Appeared Chronologically Year to Year

1991

Lieberman, Darling-Hammond, and Zuckerman (1991) published a report based on early evaluation of the process of restructuring in twelve schools in the "Schools in Tomorrow...Today." The study found that conflict is a necessary part of change, new behaviors must be learned, team building must extend to the entire school, process and content, are interrelated and the process of a team is as important as the content of educational change. The authors also found that constructive ways of finding time for

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change enhances the prospects for success; big vision with small building blocks can create consensus and progress; manageable initial projects with wide involvement and visible results enhance the possibilities of success; concrete results sustain the restructuring process; and facilitators, along with opportunities for training and for retreats, are critical components of successful restructuring efforts. The authors concluded that district and state regulations need to remove policy conflicts; give SBM schools more authority as well as responsibility for controlling their own affairs; find more flexible and proactive ways to support school's change efforts; and establish ongoing supports, networks and learning opportunities for restructuring schools. The key lesson of restructuring learned here is that shared governance, based on authentic communication and genuine collaboration, can be the engine that creates the kinds of learner-centered schools that school people want and children need.

1993

Cohn and Kottkamp (1993) completed a study using teacher voices and narratives entitled, "Teacher Work Rewards and Incentives: 1964-1984," funded by the National Institute of Education in Dade County, Florida. The purpose of the study was to explore how powerful social changes over two decades had affected teachers. From literature reviews, teacher interviews, and teacher questionnaires they concluded that what is new about current reform movement is the increased attention to teachers and students as both primary objects and subjects of change. Conclusions from the study included the belief teachers need to be engaged, active, and key players in transforming schools. The authors believed the study supported their belief that teachers are not villains but most

often victims. Schools need learning environments where teachers and stakeholders in education can meet the challenge of change by generating new structures and strategies for reaching the students of today and tomorrow. However, Cohn and Kottamp found a problem continued to be that teachers search for interpersonal and pedagogical processes to make academics meaningful while their administrators focus predominately on the product. This conflict of objectives enhanced the growing tension between what contemporary teachers wanted to accomplish and what schools expected. Major conflicts and shocks arose when teachers found themselves caught between the strong and pressing demands of accountability from outside the classroom and the equally strong sense of responsibility they personally feel to devote time to purposes beyond the prescribed curriculum and to the development of interpersonal and pedagogical processes. Ninety percent of teachers interviewed felt that students and their parents had changed over the years and that the changes were negative. The study found that teachers feel teaching is more difficult today and less rewarding than in the past. The authors concluded that the core problem with education in not with individuals but with the system, which suggests reformers must look beyond individuals to the system for restructuring.

Pechman & King (1993), in a study of school and district teams in six schools which united behind collaboratively developed missions and carefully constructed plans for program restructuring, identified six factors as critical to successful school reform: central-office support for reform initiatives, on-site teacher leadership, faculty cohesiveness, faculty commitment to the change process, ongoing involvement of a facilitating principal who encourages collaboration, and collegiality among faculty and staff. The study showed how even with the most careful structures and well-intentioned

plans for change, old habits and ingrained attitudes about schools and teaching, entrenched bureaucracies, and outmoded leadership styles die hard. The project found change to be a slow, painful, and unsettling process. The project emphasized the values of sharing ideas, the importance of self-directed planning for initiating and shaping school improvement, the need for new skills and staff training, and the necessity for providing young adolescents with developmentally appropriate programs.

1994

Short, Greer and Melvin (1994) studied nine school districts working in conjunction with two universities and an educational foundation in a three-year effort to empower school participants. The qualitative study, through observations of school participants and descriptions of school context, researched schools attempting to create environments where professionals and staff exercise the belief that they can have an impact on life and learning in the school and are given the opportunities to act on those beliefs. The purpose of the study was to understand how schools participating in a project to create empowered schools defined empowerment, how they structured the change process, and how the school culture changed as a result of the effort to empower participants. The study's findings centered around leadership, participant perceptions of their collective group, and the discovery that it is very difficult to bring about change. The researchers found the principal was the key in allowing change to happen and if the principal did not want a change to happen, it would not happen. Failure occurred when the principals distanced themselves from the project and did not encourage the structures to involve faculty. The study also found that a lead teacher was the primary element in

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bringing about the shift in commitment to empowerment. The culture of the empowered schools placed an emphasis on expert power. Participants who view themselves as experts play a tremendous role in schools that empower their participants. Empowered schools also reduce the boundaries between school and community. Schools that were successful were very aggressive in dealing with business and industry. Lastly, the study finds participants in empowered schools have the greatest opportunity to significantly address substantive problems regarding student learning and success. Empowered schools increase the significance of problems framed and enhanced the quality of problem quality of problem solutions. The authors wrote, "Schools in the change effort in this study demonstrated that empowerment participants create school cultures and school improvement efforts that have the potential for solving the hard, unclear issues that militate against student success" (p. 51).

Bondy, Kilgore, Ross and Webb (1994) conducted a study that interviewed site-based project teams of the Live Oak School District Shared Decision Making Project in conjunction with the Research and Development Center for School Improvement at the University of Florida. The study founds that SDM/SR process of shared governance is effective when the right characteristics are in place. The process must be led by a principal who keeps it moving, understands the process, and is able to share power. The school culture needs to be guided by a shared understanding of site-based management and norms that support change and risk taking. The process must be supported by a culture of collegiality that encourages participation, trust, collective problem solving and mutual responsibility, communication and training. The authors found the SDM/SR processes encourage open communication, shared information, and effective training.

Successful SDM schools likely have democratic governance structures including shared proactive leadership. The schools also demonstrated an understanding of shared decision making and school restructuring; shared a clear school restructuring vision that includes improving the academic and social development of all children; developed risk taking norms that support innovation; developed norms of innovation and optimism; promote significant role change among teachers, administrators and other members of the school community; and develop norms of collegiality. The culture of the school also established trust; developed norms that empower others to share in decision making; nurtures the collective intelligence's of the school community, including a variety of voices in school improvement; maintains open communication among all stake holders; and instituted effective training in shared decision making and school restructuring.

Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994), in a study of school improvement efforts in England, found school improvement as a distinct approach to educational change that enhanced students outcomes as well as strengthens the school's capacity for managing change. Raising student outcomes developed through focusing on the teaching-learning process and the conditions that support it. The belief is that schools need to encourage collaboration among staff. The isolation of teachers is a major barrier to improvement. Secondary schools also needed to be concerned about curriculum access. The study found staff development processes need to support individual teacher and school development. Teachers needed to be involved in each other's teachings and, where appropriate, external consultants were effective in supporting teacher development. Increased clarity and shared meanings, reflection, and review activities were used to monitor progress and enhance the professional judgment of teachers in effective schools.

The researchers observed staffs throughout the schools being encouraged to adopt leadership roles, working in groups, and noted individuals taking key roles in initiating change and supporting development work. Efforts were made to maintain momentum, links are made between formal and informal structures, images of success are created. Planning processes were used to legitimize and coordinate action and resources for school improvement are specifically allocated. The key argument in the book is that school improvement strategies can lead to cultural change in schools through modifications to their internal conditions. Also, a clear pattern was that unless a school is prepared to make tangible changes in conditions in order to support staff in working towards the priorities, little progress can be anticipated.

Lieberman, Falk, & Alexander (1994) gave voice to the experiences and understandings of teacher-leaders who at the time were or who have been the directors of six public alternative elementary schools in New York City. All schools are from 7 to 19 years old and identify themselves as being "learner-centered." Learner centered means focusing on the needs of learners in areas of school organization, governance, curriculum, and teaching. The study founds that leaders led in these schools by balancing challenges and commitments. The challenge of creating a learner centered school was made greater by the fact that directors and schools are trying to do their work within the context of a routinized big-city school system. Teacher-directors supported the growth of teachers, provided staff with continual learning opportunities, and upheld the vision and values of the school. Externally, they are challenged by working within the contexts of contradictory values and working with limited resources and supports. The study found that these schools found expression in the dailiness of their work and in the way leaders

lead by providing perspective in the midst of confusion, solving problems and setting problem-solving norms, setting priorities among competing agendas, making conflict productive, and gauging the temperature of the community and acting on its needs.

Launched in 1994, The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching studied elementary school restructuring using a search of literature, consultations with scholars, national and international surveys, and researcher observations in the field. In the study, Boyer (1995) identified the practices that really work and puts them together to identify his ideal school called the Basic School. Boyer concluded that elementary schools should teach "common learning" or the learning and experiences common to what all human beings share. Schools should stress those experiences, relationships, and ethical concerns that are common to all of people by virtue of peoples membership in the human family. Elementary schools should be organized around a curriculum that is both comprehensive and coherent. Boyer believed the push for school renewal must focus on the early years. The building blocks of an effective school are community, curriculum coherence, climate, and character. A strong sense of community needs a shared vision, teachers as leaders, parents as partners, and a curriculum with coherence that centers on the use of language acquisition and competent literacy. The core commonalities or integrated curriculum need to measure results and be accountable to parents, so the Basic School can meet its goal of "helping each child build a life as if it were a work of art"(Boyer, 1994, p. 194).

1995

Based on a literature review and observations of Brookville High, a study by Cohen (1995) founds that school improvement literature has devoted itself to replacing the machine metaphor with a metaphor of living systems such as a living being, a complex organism and cultural organism. Literature points to the fact that there is a need to affirm each school's essential uniqueness. Observations of Brookville helped the author to conclude change, when it happens at all, happens slowly and incrementally. It follows no plan, emerging instead as a patchwork of theory, personality, and compromise. True stories of school change are tales of profound uncertainty, which suggests the near impossibility of large-scale change. Cohen found money an essential part in the restructuring process, as well as a need for a balance of centralized and decentralized power, and the use of broad and patient assessments. Cohen also points to the limits of collaboration and the failure of theory.

Wheelock (1995) studied the Jefferson County Public Schools' High Project for effective middle school reform. The project, which began in 1988, set the following goals: all students will complete the middle grades on time; all students will exhibit mastery of higher-order reasoning, thinking and comprehension skills, improve self-esteem, self-efficacy, and attitudes toward schools; and all students will understand how different curricula can affect their career or post-secondary education options and select program of study that will enable them to pursue their choices. Wheelock reported that the schools improved the climate for teaching and learning as evidenced by average daily attendance being up, 100% of all students being promoted in 1993, and standardized test scores showing more eight graders moving out of lower level achievement into middle level achievement. Wheelock saw the project as having only limited success until the

district reassesses its overall approach to current professional development practice and structure, and finds more time for teachers to expand into broader roles and responsibilities. High support to teachers available through the project solidified teachers' own high expectations for themselves as professionals and empowered teachers to nurture more empowered learners.

1996

Finnan (1996), edited a book composed of researchers, facilitators, and teachers who have worked extensively in accelerated schools, concluded that the Accelerated School Project(ASP) has positively focused on transforming schools with students at risk of dropping out into schools with high expectations of all students. The ASP focused on transforming school cultures that slow down learning through remediation into cultures that accelerates all students. This was accomplished, in part, through an internationalization of three principles: unity of purpose, empowerment coupled with responsibility, and building on strengths. Inquiry plays a crucial role in the movement. ASP schools are designed for a shared appreciation of problems, using facilitating processes to test these designs, and reflecting on these results to modify and enhance designs. Finnan believed individuals played an important role in the ASP. Important changes in ASP schools happen when the beginning of an internal cultural transformation occurs in schools. The processes of vision development, taking stock, and inquiry provide a vehicle for making existing school culture explicit and give school community members the tools to create a community of inquiry. A common theme that ran through all sections of the book is the theme of enthusiasm and passion that are generated in

students, teachers, parents, and administrators as powerful learning practices are implemented in classrooms.

Goldberger and Kaziz (1996), based on their research and experience, proposed a school-to-career approach that is inseparable from a strategy for high school reform. They pointed to the fact that a growing number of communities and superintendents are seizing on the potential for using the school-to-career notion for serious, systematic education reform such as using career and occupational clusters as a way to organize the high school curriculum. The authors proposed the redesign of high schools to be organized around non tracked, thematic programs of study. They believed that selection should be based on the general interests of students. Work-based learning should be an integral part of the core curriculum for all students as well as an integration of secondary and post secondary learning environments that are critical to rigorous programs of career-related education. The researchers saw the central dilemma in the design of a school-career system for the U.S. is how to balance the education and employment goals.

In a study of restructuring schools, Griffin (1996) founds that restructuring focused on the basic elements, assumptions, and institutional regularities of schools. In restructuring schools, teachers felt a sense of obligation, recognized and acted upon the problems, retreated from beliefs that others can solve one's personal/professional problems, and teachers and administrators understand that more time is needed to understand, decide, act, and reflect together. Teachers also demonstrated an alignment with the recurring national theme of community, and acknowledge the need for a deep structure of school-specific events and conditions. Griffin also found that teachers have a greater sense of hope which appears to be a wide-ranging thoughtfulness and mindfulness

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that is demonstrated in intimate connections of self with what one does as work in schools. Lastly, there is a concern for the school's relation to everyday life. The restructuring schools demonstrated interdependence and interaction of people, events, ideas, and agencies with an attitude of "We're all in this together." Griffin wrote,

> In restructuring schools, it is claimed that the basic deeply-seated assumptions about teaching and schooling are being challenged, seriously examined for current soundness of educational practice, in some cases altered dramatically, and in other cases eliminated from the conventions of schooling as most of us have come to know them. (p. 1)

Henderson and Milstein (1996), in a study of resilient children, found large individual differences among youngsters exposed to risk and stress. The idea of resiliency, that people can bounce from negative life experiences and often become stronger in the process, is a characteristic, the researchers believed, is critical to student and educator success. The researchers believed schools have the power to build academic and personal resiliency, but to do this educators themselves must be resilient. Schools need concentrated change efforts to provide opportunities for meaningful participation, an increase in prosocial bonding, the establishment of clear and consistent boundaries, the teaching of life skills, the provision of caring and support, and fixed expectations which are clearly communicated. Change in schools depends on staffs understanding and agreeing that resiliency must be added to school vision and mission statements.

Jervis and McDonald (1996), in a study of the Four Seasons Project, whose aim was to make teachers' voices more audible in the debate about assessment reform, observed three classrooms to document how teachers in three different networks were thinking about assessment. The authors found that ideas from outside schools which

respect the complexities of the inside can help a teacher stand back from the complexities of teaching and reflect on them. They found that text making, the documenting of the ongoing complications of one's own thinking, doing, and feeling, is a crucial tool for capturing otherwise fleeting thoughts, and crystallizing them for later consultation. The authors found that the Four Seasons Project gave teachers the opportunity to formulate their ideas and reflect on them ideas by being involved in a national network of reform-minded colleagues. Teachers in all three schools in the study demonstrated that messiness is part of the restructuring story.

Jurich (1996), in a research study on restructured schools, found assumptions, including that schools aren't fundamentally sound and that schools need more than first order changes in curriculum, undergird the notion of restructuring in restructuring schools. Jurich also found implementation of innovative teaching strategies should be in the hands of school professionals; therefore, restructuring is going to differ from school site to school site. Restructuring is also a complex, multidimensional on-going process because schools are complex, diverse, and multidimensional. The study found that teachers restructure the ways in which they view themselves and learn as professionals. The influence of school restructuring efforts on teaching and learning is that it challenges teachers to rethink their efforts and reflect on their practice. Jurich also argued that teachers must be responsible to reevaluate and reassess innovations being suggested. Jurich found the conditions that support teacher learning in restructuring schools include teachers' sense that they are a community of learners, a sense of professionalism among teacher, and teachers who are empowered and validated for their work. Restructuring teacher learning became part of their work as teachers created new venues for their own

learning. Teachers saw themselves as learners and contributed to an individual and community sense of professionalism.

Jurich and Griffin (1996) in a review of literature that included studies and narratives about school restructuring efforts, concluded that restructuring, which differs from project to project and school to school, has multiple meanings, making it difficult at times to separate the terms and have a clear understanding of what each means. They found current restructuring evolved from the 1960's attitude that schools play a critical role in sociopolitical ways including social equality and international economic and strategic competitiveness, the 1970's concern with how students are being taught and how students and schools could be assessed, the *Nation at Risk* report in 1983 which brought in the first wave of school reform which called for intensification of the attempt to repair the educational system and addressed what could be done to ensure educational success, and the second wave of school change which called for a rethinking, reinventing, and restructuring schools. Jurich and Griffin believed it is critical to examine the concept of school restructuring and the potential it has for truly making a difference in schools.

The authors found assumptions underlying school restructuring efforts, namely that schools are not fundamentally sound; each school site is different; school professionals should interact with the complete school community; restructuring is a complex, multidimensional process because schools are complex, diverse and multidimensional; and restructuring is an on-going process. The authors' concluded from the studies and narratives that a critical piece of restructuring is communication among all those within a school community who must build shared understandings and practice collaborative decision-making. Also, a change in the roles and relationships of those

within school communities is needed while understanding the important role that an institution's history plays in its development. The authors found that the challenges facing restructuring include involving those in schools in discussions concerning their beliefs and practices, and ensuring that schools have the knowledge they need.

Keedy and Achilles (1996), in a review of field research on school restructuring, found that restructuring in the 1980's has four dimensions: site-based management, professionalizing teaching, parent and student choice, and teaching for understanding. The context of the article lies in the instructional dimension. The authors believed adopting structural changes cannot change how people think about their work. They are much easier to implement than normative changes. Staffs may be trying to implement structures without first establishing a consensual, normative framework. Practitioners can begin to ground their normative thinking about schooling within their own practices: why they want to change, what they want to achieve, and how they should go about the change process as they begin implementing organization structures. The authors point to needed counter-assumptions and to traditional assumptions including teachers sharing decision-making power with students, and students filtering and interpreting universal truths. The authors found that students are bored because they see little connection between the curriculum and their daily lives. Also, intellectually challenging classroom conditions cannot exist for students unless they first exist for teachers. A review of field research founds little evidence that teacher-student-principal relationships are changing. Normative thinking (reconceptualizing how norms characterize ideal relationships) requires staffs to reflect critically about their workplaces. U.S. schools have not been reflective places. The authors advocated that staffs shared theory about their practice

using critical inquiry and monitoring the change process. School reform policies should include an action researcher role for professors, broader outcomes than skill development for administrator preparation programs, and time for teacher leader and principal reflection on practice. What is needed is macro-level, human capital policy, particularly for high quality professional development? The authors wrote, "Genuine school restructuring, where students are meaning-makers and problem solvers, cannot occur without establishing new relationships among student, teachers and principals. Yet these relationships do not appear to be changing"(p. 105).

Lambert (1996) using narratives from teachers who had insights about using models of learning and teaching that more accurately reflect the nature of learning and of the world conclude change in school takes a long time. Lambert proposed teachers become proactive in their schools by forming an ecological web which links students, community, and teachers into a group which then looks for solutions to school problems. Lambert wrote, "Constructivist teachers working in schools as active learning communities will confront failing programs"(p. xi). Teacher leaders need a perspective that is systemic and ecological in nature because Lambert believe systematic change will happen when enough teachers summon the collective will to be proactive and persevere with courage toward common goals. Structures need to invite and facilitate development opportunities for professional teachers that include authentic learning, deep levels of dialogue, focused inquiry, and continual rethinking of purpose and function. Lambert concluded that teaching is an act of leadership with teaching and learning being highly interactive and, therefore, the preparation of teachers needs to change to promote constructivist teacher leadership.

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Louis, Marks, and Kruse's (1996) study of restructuring schools, based on survey data collected on more than 900 teachers in 24 nationally selected restructuring elementary, middle and high schools, was grounded in the assumption that how teachers interact when they are not in their classrooms may be critical to the future of school restructuring and to the effects of restructuring on students. Attention needed to be paid to the development of the professional community that included teachers' collective engagement in sustained efforts to improve practice. Professional communities are defined by movements toward five elements of practice: shared values, focus on student learning, collaboration, deprivatized practice, and reflective dialogue. The authors found that several school conditions are necessary to support the creation of strong professional communities, including structural conditions and human and social resources. Structural conditions which lower staffing complexity, scheduling common planning time, and the stimulated empowerment of teachers prove important supports to professional community in schools. The study found that changing school structures could enhance the professional community that is the core of a positive school culture. Analysis suggested many national, states, and local policies designed to increase teacher job performance may be insufficient by themselves. The study affirmed the importance of professional development schools as healthy, professionally sustaining environments in which teachers are encouraged to do their best job.

Myers (1996), completed a two-year study of the Schools Make A Difference(SMAD) project in London. The project, based on working with poor minority children, wanted to lay foundations for raising standards of achievement and to make teachers and schools more effective. SMAD worked with schools

based on four fields: school effectiveness, school improvement, managing change and action research. Myers found schools could make a difference to the quality of the educational experience and the educational outcome of its students. The SMAD project brought high levels of motivation and activity from participating faculty. The project found that an ethos and attitude could change culture to positively affect student learning. The SMAD project promoted supportive structures for students, including mentoring, action planning, target setting, more use of independent learning, and additional support for young people. Myers wrote,

> At the root of this effort is the complicated task of creating certain relationships and ways of working, a culture that is based on some shared assumptions about teaching and learning, and quite systematic ways of planning, implementing and monitoring that involved all participants. (p.162)

1997-1998

Newman, King, and Rigdon (1997) found, in a five year study of 24 restructuring schools, that strong accountability was rare in schools, organizational capacity was not related to accountability, and that strong internal accountability tended to reinforce a school's organizational capacity. Authors argued that issues keep this popular theory of external accountability from working in practice. The study found three unresolved issues in the theory of restructuring: implementation, organizational capacity, and internal accountability. External accountability alone offers no assurance that a school faculty will have adequate technical knowledge, skill, or resources required for school performance. The study found 1/3 of the schools had strong accountability systems and that organizational capacity was not related to accountability. Schools with high external

accountability tended to have low organizational capacity and strong internal accountability tended to be associated with a school's organizational capacity. It should be noted that schools chosen had reformed from the bottom-up. The authors felt that organizational capacity in schools can probably be built by means other than accountability.

Based on his findings of the results from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988-1994, a study of 24, 000 students and their parents, teachers and schools, Coleman et. all (1997) concluded that a need for a new model for schools is needed. One that is output-driven, where meaning is constructed on the principle that the educational system needs to be reorganized and its resources directed toward increasing student achievement. Coleman believed that student learning happens in classrooms and the key to raising academic performance is developing strong norms that stress student achievement by establishing external standards, evaluating school and student academic performance over time, and rewarding students, teachers, and schools for achievement gains. The author also believed that teachers and students need achievement norms to motivate them to attain high levels of academic performance, and externally set standards and teacher freedom to achieve those standards. The study, which compared student achievement levels between 1980 and 1990 sees relationships among in academic excellence, educational equity, and student and teacher output. Coleman felt schools often accommodate students by watering down academic standards and course requirements. When teachers are allowed to fine-tune their styles and customize their classroom environments they are able to inspire students to work hard and behave well, which translates into positive academic growth. External requirements such as external

standards, public accountability, and uncompromising assessment of student performance make administrators, teachers, and students more aware of what is expected of them. Coleman believed keys to what he calls output driven schools included students must be informed of incentive systems, student assessments are viewed as fair and valid to their future, and public schools are reorganized into smaller, schools with standards, and incentive systems that reward high academic standards.

Kirby and Meza (1997) in a study of eleven schools that began implementing the Accelerated Schools Process in 1994 and who were using coaches to guide them through implementing the restructuring process, found empowerment is not very easily accomplished. The researchers found, in spite of barriers identified by some coaches, the coaching model has been remarkably successful. Coaches who are or have been classroom teachers appear to be in the most advantageous position to be coaches. The principals' support is a key to success.

The 1997-1998 Annenberg Institute for School Reform Report under the guidance of Ramon Cortines addresses three interrelated questions: How can communities most effectively engage their publics in a conversation about what they expect their schools to accomplish with and for their students? What skills, conditions, and resources do schools and teachers need in order to meet and exceed these expectations? How do students, teachers, schools, and districts demonstrate that they are meeting or exceeding the expectations of their communities?

The report found that those concerned with "the serious redesign of American schooling" (p. 7) should strive to realize the following conditions: schools working in close collaboration with their community, resources arranged so that each child is known

well in order to shape each child's schooling, uncompromisingly high academic expectations for all children, careful and continuing review of each child's actual work through assessment which is intended to improve the child's learning, teaching habits of the heart and of the mind, and exhibiting the ideals that are inherent in democratic and thoughtful learning communities.

The report presented seven principles which should guide reform: all students can and must be successful; the constraining influences of race, class and gender must be neutralized; documented evidence must support the achievement of this goal; high standards must be linked with building the capacity of schools to meet those standards; change is a complex process which must involve engaging every part of the school community; the expanding scope of school improvement depends on our ability to reach the majority of teachers and administrators who are unwilling or unable to change, while at the same time, providing support for those teachers and administrators who are already in the process of changing their practice; there is more than one right solution to the problem of changing education practice.

Finn (1998) looked beyond the school and turned his attention to parents and the specific role the home environment can play in students' academic achievement. Finn cited research, which found that "specific parenting practices are related to students' academic achievement", (p. 20), which led him to conclude that the home environment is among the most important influences on academic performance. Finn cited three types of parental engagement which have been found to be associated with school performance: actively organizing and monitoring the child's time, helping with homework, and

discussing school matters with a child. There is also wide support for parents reading to their children and being read to by their children.

Finn argued that while schools can foster behaviors at home that promote student performance, outreach programs are crucial for encouraging parental involvement. The claim is that schools cannot meet the current challenges of reform without first doing a better job of connecting with parents and the general public.

Returning to the school environment, but continuing to explore the importance of reaching each child, Raywind (1997, 1998) answered skeptics of the small school movement with her finding that "numerous studies confirm that small schools lead to improved student achievement and enable educators to realize many of the other goals of school reform"(p. 34). Her support included the following findings from state and national studies: high school students in small schools are more likely to pass major subjects and progress towards graduation; students in small schools perform better on standardized tests; school size is more influential on achievement than any other factor; as school size increases math and science scores decrease; all students (especially the disadvantaged) learn more in math, reading, history and science when they are in small schools; and size becomes even more of a factor as students grow older. Raywind answered critics of small schools by acknowledging that after a compilation of 103 studies, none of which finds larger schools to be an advantage.

Raywind also cites the 1970s research which found that low-achievers and at-risk students do better in small schools, which in turn means that small schools can reduce the negative effects that poverty and race can have on schools' efforts. In fact, "whereas in large high schools success tends to be stratified along socioeconomic lines, this does not

hold true for small schools"(p. 35). In addition, violence and dropping-out is reduced in small schools. Beyond the school walls, it has been found that smallness allows for the type of human relationships and sense of belonging which affect long term human behavior, issues of self-esteem, and the rate of college attendance. These successes of small schools are attributed to three factors: small size, an unconventional organizational structure, and a setting that operates more like a community than a bureaucracy. In short, "small schools accommodate much from the lessons we have learned about school effectiveness"(p. 37).

Synthesis of Restructuring Studies

Collectively, the studies exhibit the belief that restructuring at school sites can be effective in bettering conditions at schools, strengthening schools' capacities, bettering schools' cultures, and improving the learning of students. A key element found in the restructuring studies is the importance of changing traditional internal conditions in schools. If schools are to be more effective in educating students, then teachers' roles must develop in some way to transform internal conditions in schools to better deal with the dilemmas and problems of teaching and learning. The studies also agree that the right conditions must be in place if teachers are to have any impact at all. However, proper conditions still do not mean the process of restructuring will be fluid, smooth, or even successful.

The complexity and difficulty involved in restructuring make the change process slow, incremental, and chaotic. There is a common view that systemic restructuring is virtually impossible; however, the process of restructuring is a daily, constant and consistent struggle at schools working toward building common purposes and beliefs.

Restructuring, if it happens at all, must be developed and implemented by school sites and, more importantly, teachers at those sites. The studies agree that teachers are the key to transforming schools.

The restructuring studies suggest that there are no definite recipes or standard packages that ensure effective restructuring. The many different variables that determine each school's culture and context mean that school sites are tremendously different in makeup from one another and, therefore, restructuring processes need to be adapted to individual contexts. The studies also demonstrate that no one change is going to make a difference. Small changes can impact entire school cultures, but restructuring must demonstrate many forms, shapes, and efforts to be effective. For example, site based management will not be effective unless there are shared governance structures in place. Even with those structures in place, site based teams must be empowered to change elements in the teaching and learning process. Thus, new processes and reforms have limits. Therefore, restructuring needs to be multifaceted and multidimensional to overcome the many barriers and limits in individual schools.

The studies suggest the need for a constructivist approach to facilitate school reform. Restructuring school sites need to promote forms of close collaboration, a strong sense of community, shared governance structures, shared understandings of purpose, and empowered teachers who recreate the school structures and conditions needed to better educate students and solve problems and dilemmas associated with schools. Teachers, if they are to be effective in restructuring schools, need to challenge their own deep-seated assumptions and beliefs about learning. The effectiveness of restructuring is as dependent not only on changing visible school structures as on changing perceptions

by school participants. Adopting structural changes will not bring about changes in how educators think about their work. Therefore, conditions need to be in place to support teaching and learning. This learning happens in different ways, but the studies point toward professionals being in charge of implementing innovative strategies and structures as a solid means toward personal and professional growth. Structures need to support professional development in order to open communication lines between staff members and enhance the sense of a professional community that deepens the relationships among school participants. A key to restructuring is a shift in educators' ideas, beliefs, and values which new structures can then promote.

Some of the studies suggest external forces such as coaches, standards, and external accountability measures can assist in the restructuring process, but these external forces are only effective when they assist teachers. External forces that do not promote teacher freedom and influence are viewed as restraining forces in the restructuring process.

Most importantly, the studies demonstrate that when conditions, structures, and cultures promote teacher influence, then teachers can help focus schools on the teaching and learning process. Most of the studies suggest that external demands need to be lifted in order to facilitate this process. National, state, local, district, and school policies need to support teachers in their capacity to affect reform and professional development so that teachers have the knowledge, support, freedom, and direction to better the teaching and learning process. Policies are needed which assist teachers in discovering pedagogical processes based on developmentally appropriate education that makes learning

meaningful. Consequently, positive change in schools is dependent on teachers understanding the learning processes of their respective students.

In addition to recognizing the importance of teachers, the studies suggest the importance of educational leaders who can help to facilitate the reform process. The bureaucracy currently in place has tremendous power to slow down, sabotage, or halt the restructuring process in schools. School leaders must be allowed to lead the restructuring process. Effective leadership does not ensure success, but without leadership there has been found to be little hope of changing schools. Therefore, new leadership roles are needed if restructuring schools are going to be successful. District and school site leaders need to take on the role of facilitating the change process. Teachers must also be proactive to redefine teaching as a leadership position in schools. This emergence of teacher as instructional leader or teacher-leader demonstrates the new emphasis in the restructuring movement on a shift in leaders' roles.

Postscript

From the negative rhetoric of politicians and the press it would seem that restructuring and the school change movement has failed to change schools since Cusick's 1973 participant observation study of a high school in which he found that schools are set up so that teachers pass on knowledge and students receive it, creating a doctrine of adolescent inferiority and downward communication which denies students freedom of activity by only requiring minimal competence to do well in classes.

Cuban (1998) acknowledges the difficulty in arguing that things have remained the same when he points out that judging an innovation's success or failure has been no easy task. He believes the key questions that need to be answered to determine the

effectiveness of school reform and innovation are (1)what criteria are being used to make judgments, (2)whose criteria are being used to make judgment and (3)how schools change the reforms as they are implemented? Cuban goes on to say that schools change reforms as much as reforms change schools. The problem he outlines is that effectiveness is based on a view of organizations as instruments for solving problems through top-down authority, formal structures, and clearly specified goals. Practitioners differ considerably from policy makers on what is effective. Cuban writes, "Of course teachers seek improvements in students' performance and attitudes but what teachers count as significant results are seldom test scores but attitudes, values and actual behavior on academic and nonacademic tasks in and out of the classroom" (p. 459). Cuban suggests that innovation effectiveness should be based on such issues as the schools site's capacity for adaptiveness and the longevity of innovations in schools. He warns that policy makers need to get away from thumbs-up or thumbs-down verdicts on reform, pointing instead to improvement in practice.

In response to those who view school reform as the next panacea for education, there is the perspective that "Too often the reform literature is technocratic, functionalist, and essentialist, presenting a series of decontextualized principles or procedures that represent what teachers do or should know. It all sounds deceptively alluring and appealing"(Vinz, 1997, p. 126). As the current condition of many of our urban and rural schools demonstrates, the actual reform of a real school populated by real people in a real community is deceptively elusive and demanding. The problem is that while we have come to understand that context is extremely influential on programs and professional

educators (Griffin, 1997), much of the educational community's current knowledge about school reform isn't "grounded" in local knowledge.

Even though most school reform experts are careful to point out the decontexualized nature of their findings and warn readers of the dangers inherent in adopting particular findings as universal "truths" about school reform; too often those involved in the reform process look for a laundry list of solutions rather than sift through the findings for the particular "truths" which fit their particular needs of their particular school and their particular community. The greatest danger of our desire for the solution which will "fix" what is wrong with education in our country is that such a goal pressures politicians and school reformers to identify and adopt generalized "truths" which can be applied across the board, rather than assessing the specific context of a particular school and then carefully selecting those practices and findings from the school reform research which best serve the needs of a particular school.

The fate of school reform seems to lie within the current debate between those who are calling for the centralization and standardization of school practices and those who are calling for the decentralization and individualization of schools. Do we want nationally uniform schools which strive to give all students equal access to the same "good life" by adhering to some determined model of what is best, or do we want eclectic schools with the capacity to meet the diverse needs of each community while remaining true to some nationally recognized view of the purpose of education? Or is our answer some paradoxical combination of the two questions?

The third wave of restructuring dominates reform talk in the late 1990's with national goals, curricular standards, and tests. However, the trend is dangerous if it does

not expand teacher influence and enhance teachers' freedom to take part in school reform at site levels. The successful restructuring of schools needs to be dominated by the paradoxical thinking seen in John Dewey's work instead of the polar either/or thinking that currently dominates national goals, standards, and tests. Niels Bohr-the Nobel Prize winning physicist writes, "The opposite of a true statement is a false statement, but the opposite of a profound truth can be another profound truth." Successful restructuring needs to embrace opposites, truths, and paradoxes to be successful in restructuring schools. Education needs to embrace the following paradoxes:

- The key to successful restructuring is teacher empowerment and stronger leadership by site administrators.
- Curriculum needs to be based on community interests and be responsive to developmentally appropriate needs of students.
- Restructuring must happen from the bottom-up while being supported and guided by top-down policies.
- Teaching and learning in the classroom needs to take place at the crossroads of public interests and teachers' and personal interests.
- Theory and practice need to be combined as a foundation for restructuring. Practitioners alone will not be able to restructure schools. They must depend on external forces for support, guidance, and professional development.
- Academic content needs to be bridged to students' personal lives.
- Teachers need to be caring while also demanding of students.

- Teachers need to be part of a strong community while also having the freedom to be individuals within the community.

Nelson (1998) talks about the teleconference on Tuesday, 26 August 1997, in which a panel of educational specialists from the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning (CFL), formerly the state department of education, convened to review the progress of the three-year implementation plan for the new "Minnesota graduation rule" and its accompanying curriculum known as "Profile of Learning"(p. 679). In the spirit of the current political climate which calls for increased control, an effort to find the right answer, and the use of the type of iron fisted demands for accountability so prevalent in the prior eras of educational reform, the "graduation standards" are being used to mandate what happens in classrooms. Such an abuse of the education community's plethora of new findings around teaching and learning threatens to return schools mindlessly to the old ways of Franklin Bobbit (1918), Ralph Tyler (1940) and Hilda Taba (1960) "who promoted the use of student objectives in the development of sequential learning activities"(p. 680). The danger is in using what we have recently learned as support for returning to what we already know does not work simply in the name of a conservative wish to return to basics in the face of the daunting challenges raised by the complex and diverse society we finds ourselves living in today.

If school reform has taught us anything, it is that no one reform or innovation will work for a school all the time or even some of the time; that is to say that their is not one best system (Tyack, 1988). Much like a general contractor who goes about the job of building a particular family's dream home, educators need to see themselves as learning constructors whose job it is to help communities build the type of school and learning

environment which best serves their needs given their available resources. Just as no one house is right for all families, no one school is right for all communities. Certainly there are some basics about which we can agree, but we need to be careful to not prescribe too much based on the assumption that we know what is best. Communication between educators and the community is crucial, which means that educators must know the community before any decisions about what is right can be made. Like the contractor who gets to know the clients and their particular needs, school reformers must work with the community while drawing on a broad understanding of the available schooling options.

Researchers and educators must continue to experiment beyond what is traditional, and challenge current assumptions and beliefs about schooling so that our understanding of how to educate students expands to meet the increasingly diverse needs of our society. However, this work should not be done with the political intent of finding the answer for our nation. School reformers should be in the business of customizing schools, not in the business of mass production.

This ability to customize schools in response to the context fostered by the values and beliefs of particular communities requires reformers who understand how to meet the educational needs of each community. Such work requires a broad knowledge of reform possibilities, an understanding and appreciation of the change process, and an ability to assess the educational needs of a particular community. It is this initial assessment of the community, this anthropological perspective, which seems to be missing from the reform literature. There is a staggering amount written about what works and doesn't work and why, but we found little mention of what tools reformers and those interested in reform

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might use to assess a particular school's educational needs in terms of the values and beliefs which shape each community's' particular view of the "good life." We believe that such assessing must become part of the work being done in schools of education, so that tomorrow's educational leaders will understand how to join the needs of a community with the best of what is known about the teaching and learning process. It seems to us that without educators who can use reform to bridge the gap between the growing body of education knowledge and the increasingly diverse values and beliefs of the various communities which make up our nation, then all that we have learned about schooling and school reform will be reduced to a single blueprint of "the good school" within which tomorrow's educators and students will be forced to tinker. The waves of school reform have created a tremendous amount of knowledge, but it is ultimately how we use that knowledge to meet the diverse needs of our students that will determine whether we boldly move forward or retreat.

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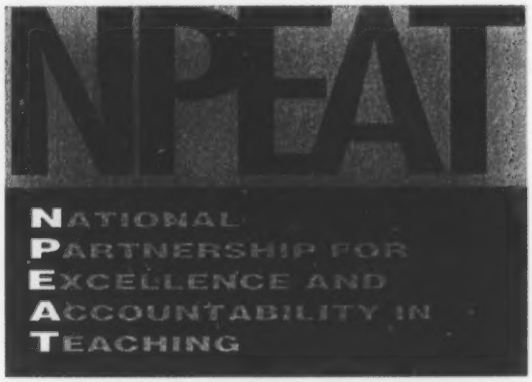

University of Maryland, College Park
College of Education
College Park, MD 20742

Phone: (301) 405-2341 ♦ Fax: (301) 405-3573

Website: **WWW.NPEAT.ORG**